

BELMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

August 8, 2004

Meeting held in Conference Room 2, Belmont Town Hall

Attending: Richard Cheek, Co-chair, presiding; Paul Bell, Matthew Genta, Linn Hobbs, Arleyn Levee, Richard Pichette, Nancy Richards, Michael Smith.

Absent: Co-Chair Lydia Ogilby, Lisa Harrington, Sharon Vanderslice.

Guests: Kevin Looney, Manager of Buildings and Facilities
Joel Mooney, Chair, Town Hall Complex Building Committee, Attorney
Steven Rosales, Town Hall Complex Building Committee member
Donna Moulthrop, Director of Health Services
Clarissa Rowe, landscape architect, Brown Richardson & Rowe
Eva Patalas, resident at 596 Pleasant Street

Item #1

Concerning the repair/replacement of lower entrance door at south corner of Belmont Town Hall

Kevin Looney Manager of Buildings and Facilities, informed the Commission that during the next phase of construction of the Town Hall complex, the lower south door of the Town Hall will become the temporary ADA accessible entrance (for a possible duration of 8-10 weeks). Due to dampness in the area, the historic wooden door is warped, swollen and difficult to operate. He requested the option to replace this door with a fiberglass door if it could not be repaired to function properly.

After much discussion concerning the reasons for the current condition of the present door, the temporary nature of the accessibility problem for this door and other alternative options, Mike Smith presented a motion: TO disapprove the request for a fiberglass door; to require appropriate repairs/adjustments to the existing door, including sealing the edges of the door and adding weather stripping, and if these were not successful, to replace the door with another wooden door, paneled in the same manner and appropriate to the integrity of the building. The motion was unanimously passed.

Item #2

Concerning the provisions for trash storage and removal in the Town Hall Complex

Steven Rosales, member of the Town Hall Complex Building Committee, came before the Commission as a private citizen, not as a representative of that Committee. He made a lengthy presentation concerning the issues of trash storage and removal from the Town Hall campus. The rehabilitation of the School Administration Building and the Town Hall Annex is slated for completion by the end of the year with occupancy shortly thereafter. Since there are no locations within the buildings for temporary storage of

trash, garbage and recyclable materials, some outdoor containment and a frequent pick-up schedule will be necessary. Mr. Rosales submitted a multi-page series of memos (attached), which he had solicited privately from the Chief of the Fire Dept, from the Town Administrator, from Kevin Looney, and from Russell Disposal Co. concerning various regulations, cost estimates, and other aspects of the trash problem.

Stating that he was speaking for himself, not for the Town Hall Complex Building Committee, Mr. Rosales urged the BHC to select one of three sites that he designated on the campus—ranging from "the least offensive" to the "most effective" as the location for a dumpster, saying that this method of trash removal was, in his opinion, the necessary and most economical solution to this problem. His suggested locations were: between the Town Hall and the School Administration Building, accessible from Pleasant Street; on the Moore Street side of the Homer building, accessible from Moore St; and behind the Homer building, possibly accessible from the bank building's alley or from the Concord Avenue side parking area of the Town Hall Complex.

A lengthy discussion ensued. Richard Cheek, asked Donna Moulthrop, who was attending the meeting at Mr. Rosales' request, whether daily pick-up would not be a better choice for health reasons than a once-or-twice-a -week dumpster pick-up?

Linn Hobbs noted the imposition upon the Moore Street residents of a dumpster on that side of the building due to its unsightliness and the noise of truck pick-up. Paul Bell noted that some of the suggested sites would eliminate parking spaces, a critical disadvantage. He inquired about the suggestion to locate the dumpster at the police station, to which Kevin Looney replied that their preliminary estimate from Edwards & Kelcey indicated that what they considered as necessary alterations to this site would cost c. \$50,000 (Memorandum attached). Several members expressed their opinions that this seemed an unduly high estimate and requested more study of this matter.

The chair recognized Joel Mooney, speaking as chair of the Town Hall Complex Building Committee. He noted that the dumpster problem had yet to receive the full attention of his committee, but he felt that any loss of parking was a "lightning rod issue." He wants some general guidelines for his Committee from the Historic Commission concerning a viable solution to this problem which, at the same time, did not destroy the historic character and the fine landscape of the newly reconstructed campus. He would rather that a dumpster not be visible from the public way and agreed that the police station site should be further explored and a more accurate estimate obtained for the restructuring of this location.

Mike Smith, also a member of the Town Hall Complex Committee expressed his disagreement with Rosales' conclusions about trash removal, suggesting that although there was no easy answer, every effort must be made to find an appropriate solution which would not damage the historic character of the Complex. Regarding above-mentioned guidelines, the HDC was unanimous in support of the statement by Mr. Smith that the HDC will not support placing a dumpster and related trash enclosure in front of

the buildings; and the HDC recommended pursuing a solution at the service area behind the Annex or an alternate location such as the Police Station or Municipal Light Building.

Mr. Rosales then questioned the jurisdiction of the BHDC over the placement of trash dumpsters in historic districts. In response, Richard Cheek read the paragraph from p. 77 of *A Guidebook for Historic District Commissions in Massachusetts*, published by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, that specifically mentions trash receptacles as subject to the Commission's jurisdiction. Attorney member Richard Pichette then cited Massachusetts General Law chapter 40C, the Historic Districts Act and Belmont By-Law Article 15 as the enabling statutes that give the Commission the right to review the design and placement of such man-made structures in the landscape as trash dumpsters.

Donna Moulthrop noted that she was willing to try any alternative to find a satisfactory solution to this problem.

Item #3

Concerning the preliminary plans for landscape alterations at 12 Moore St.

Linn Hobbs presented a detailed memorandum (attached) explaining the history of his historic residence and its setting which had resulted in the present condition of it being one of the few homes in Belmont with no on-site parking places. Since Belmont does not permit overnight street parking, he has had to rely on the kindness of neighbors, among other temporary solutions to this problem. He noted that as a result of the Town Hall campus construction, all his previous daytime parking alternatives on the street had become unavailable.

He introduced Clarissa Rowe, a landscape architect and a principal of Brown, Richardson & Rowe of Boston, who presented two boards containing pictures of the site conditions and her suggested preliminary solution. Noting the very constricted and difficult topographic conditions extant at 12 Moore St., she proposed inserting two small spaces into the slope at the southeastern edge of the property along Moore Street. Discussion ensued concerning details of the design. Richard Pichette noted that parking problems for this property met the definition of "hardship" as defined by the statute. Ms. Rowe will refine her designs for future presentation and a vote.

Items #4 & #5

Concerning the possible replacement of wooden gutters with metal at #596 and #701 Pleasant St.

Ms Patalas presented photographs of her house showing the current gutter situation. Discussion followed concerning the need to retain wood gutters where they were visible and integral to the architectural character of the house as well as the problems of joining a wood gutter to a metal gutter. Mike suggested that there might be another gutter material on the market which might be suitable. It was decided that a site visit by Mike Smith, Paul Bell, and possibly Matt Genta would be appropriate to inspect the specific issues for both these residences to resolve this problem.

Item #7

Update on proposed articles for the Belmont Citizen-Herald on preservation issues

Matt Genta submitted a draft of his article concerning Demolition Delay by-laws. Members promised to comment before the next meeting.

Due to the late hour, Items #6, #8, #10 through #13 were tabled to be considered at the next meeting. Richard Pichette noted, however, concerning Item #9 (Pleasant Street Reconstruction Project), he, together with Arthur Wolf son, had met with Glenn Clancy, the acting Director of Community Development Department to present the alternatives that the BHDC wanted to have considered. Mr. Clancy had reacted favorably to several of the alternatives.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Arleyn A. Levee